

I believe it is critical to the economic vitality of California to have fair competition for Internet services. There are only three generally available delivery methods of Internet connectivity available to consumers and businesses: phone lines, cable lines, and wireless. The claims by the entrenched ILEC monopolies (SBC and Verizon) that they should no longer be required to provide open access to competitive ISP and communications carriers due to the overall competitive market alternatives is without technical merit. Technical limitations, available bandwidth, low latency and overall performance limitations of the alternative technologies of cable and wireless Internet, simply don't offer a true competitive alternative to wired Internet connectivity for many existing and emerging Internet applications. Today there is no wireless alternative to high speed DSL or T1 lines that is widely available, and it is always subject to line of sight limitations that make it unavailable to the majority of consumers and businesses. Further, the continued consolidation of the wireless industry is bringing that whole segment under the control of the same small number of ILEC's that claim such services are providing the fair competition to their wired services. In most cities this has the effect of creating a duopoly of an incumbent cable company and an ILEC.

Open access and competition to phone company wired lines that go into every home and business in California is the only way to ensure continued vitality and competition for Internet services. Competitive ISP's offer features, options and service levels that the phone companies don't offer at any price. ILEC's such as SBC are so confident with their near monopoly position even now that the customer support for SBC Internet services has been outsourced to offshore based customer service representatives that offer an appalling level of technical skills that are widely regarded as some of the worst in the industry.

Please keep fair competition for Internet services.

Regards,
Les Kent